

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3-26, 28-35, and 45-52 will be pending upon entry of the present amendment. Claims 1, 28, and 35 are amended and claims 2 and 27 are cancelled. No new matter has been added with the present amendment.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for indicating the allowability of claims 17-26 and the allowability of the subject matter of claims 2, 13-16, 31-34, 46, and 47. Accordingly, claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of claim 2.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102, 103

Claims 1 and 3-7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Onion (U.S. 6,378,214), and claims 8-12, 27-30, 35, 45, and 48-52 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Onion in view of Polevoy et al (U.S. 6,685,379, hereafter *Polevoy*).

Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of claim 2, indicated by the Examiner as having allowable subject matter. Applicant therefore understands claim 1 to be in condition for allowance, together with dependent claims 3-16.

Claim 28 has been placed in independent form, and recites, in part, “a blade ... including a slot, the slot including a wide portion and a narrow portion; ... and a retaining element configured to fit in the slot and prevent movement of the neck from the narrow portion of the slot to the wide portion of the slot.” In rejecting original claim 27, the Examiner argues that it would have been obvious to modify Onion to “provide a slot having a first portion having a first width that was larger than the collars to allow a collar to pass through ....” Then in rejecting claim 28, the Examiner points to Onion’s attachment member 64 as corresponding to the retaining element of claim 28. However, applicant asserts that these positions are not compatible for the purpose of rejecting claim 28. As acknowledged by the Examiner, Onion’s attachment member 64 is not removable from the blade (see page 4 of the Office Action, last paragraph). If the attachment member prevents movement of the neck to the wide portion of the slot, as would be necessary to support a rejection of claim 28, then it will also prevent the collar from passing through the wide portion of the slot, which was the motivation offered to modify

Onion's slot in the obviousness rejection of claim 27. If the collar cannot pass through the wide portion, there is no motivation to provide the wide portion in the first place. If, on the other hand, the slot is provided with a wide portion that *does* allow a collar to pass through, it cannot also be provided with Onion's attachment member.

Applicant notes that the Examiner has not argued that Polevoy teaches or suggests a retaining element as recited in claim 28. Further, applicant believes that such a combination would be improper, inasmuch as it would render Onion unsuitable for its intended purpose.

For the reasons outlined above, applicant believes claim 28 to be allowable over the art of record.

Claim 45 recites, in part, "a slot formed in the blade and having first and second ends, the first end and a portion of the slot extending between the first and second ends having a first width, and the second end having a second width greater than the first width; [and] a retaining element positioned within the slot." The Examiner has argued that Onion's attachment member 64 is analogous to the retaining element of claim 45, and that it would have been obvious to modify Onion's slot by providing a widened portion to accommodate an enlarged collar. However, it has been demonstrated that Onion's attachment member 64 cannot be combined with an enlarged portion of its slot because the attachment member would defeat the purported motivating reason for providing the enlarged portion. Onion, therefore, does not teach or suggest all the limitations of claim 45. Accordingly, applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection of claim 45.

In light of the above amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that all pending claims are allowable. While applicant has chosen not to argue the allowability of many of the dependent claims, this should not be construed as an admission that the dependent claims are not allowable on their own merits, apart from their allowability as depending from allowable base claims. Applicant, therefore, respectfully requests entry of the present amendment and timely allowance all pending claims. The Examiner is encouraged to contact Mr. Bennett by telephone at (206) 694-4848 to discuss the above and any other distinctions between the claims and the applied references, if desired. If the Examiner notes any

informalities in the claims, he is encouraged to contact Mr. Bennett by telephone to expeditiously correct such informalities.

The Director is authorized to charge any additional fees due by way of this Amendment, or credit any overpayment, to our Deposit Account No. 19-1090.

Respectfully submitted,

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